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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 002115

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRAQ: ITALY HOPES FOR EARLY SECURITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM EMIL SKODON, PARA 1.5 B AND D.

1. (C) SUMMARY. WITH THE PLANNED VISIT OF PRESIDENT BUSH IN EARLY JUNE, ITALY WANTS TO FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON IRAQ,S NEW POLITICAL PHASE AND THE CONSENSUS AND DETERMINATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ASSIST IRAQIS IN THAT PROCESS. ITALY HOPES FOR AN EARLY ADOPTION OF A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON IRAQ, AND IS WORKING WITH FRANCE, GERMANY, AND RUSSIA AND OTHERS TO ENCOURAGE A COOPERATIVE APPROACH. SENIOR OFFICIALS BELIEVE FRANCE WANTS AGREEMENT BEFORE THE JUNE 6 NORMANDY EVENTS, AND URGE US FLEXIBILITY IN STRENGTHENING/INSERTING RESOLUTION REFERENCES TO IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY, ONGOING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE NEW IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND MULTINATIONAL FORCES, RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. ITALY APPEARS UNLIKELY TO COMMIT TO A PRT OR FSB IN AFGHANISTAN UNTIL IRAQ,S POST-JUNE STATUS, AND KEY ASPECTS OF THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE - IN WHICH ITALY WILL CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE - ARE CLARIFIED (AFGHANISTAN DETAILS WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL). END SUMMARY.

2. (C) DCM, ACCOMPANIED BY POL-MIL COUNSELOR, MET ON MAY 27 WITH MFA SECRETARY GENERAL UMBERTO VATTANI AND ON MAY 28 WITH PM BERLUSCONI,S DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR, GIOVANNI CASTELLANETA. TOPICS INCLUDED PLANS FOR THE PRESIDENT,S JUNE 4-5 VISIT, IRAQ, AND AFGHANISTAN (SEPTEL). ON IRAQ, BOTH STRESSED THE NEED TO FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THE NEW POLITICAL PHASE IRAQ IS ENTERING, AS A NEW SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT MOVES TOWARD ELECTIONS, AND ON THE COMMITMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (AND THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS) IN ASSISTING THAT PROCESS. ACCORDINGLY, THE MILITARY/SECURITY ASPECTS OF THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE - WHILE VITAL TO ENSURING THE NEXT PHASE OF IRAQ,S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT - SHOULD BE GIVEN LESS PUBLIC/PUBLIC EMPHASIS.

3. (C) BOTH EXPRESSED THE STRONG HOPE THAT EFFORTS TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WILL SUCCEED BEFORE THE PRESIDENT,S VISIT TO ITALY, WHICH WILL COMMEMORATE THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROME,S LIBERATION. BOTH OFFICIALS TOLD DCM THAT THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS REACHING OUT TO THE FRENCH, GERMANS, RUSSIANS, AND CHINESE TO COUNSEL A COOPERATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH IN NEW YORK. THEY EXPECT GERMANY AND CHINA TO POSE FEW DIFFICULTIES, INDICATING THEIR GREATEST CONCERN IS FRANCE. CASTELLANETA DID NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT A FRENCH INTERLOCUTOR (NFI) HAD INDICATED TO HIM THAT PARIS WANTS AGREEMENT ON A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION BEFORE THE PRESIDENT,S JUNE 5-6 VISIT TO NORMANDY.

4. (C) BOTH OFFICIALS URGED THE US TO SUPPORT CHANGES TO THE RESOLUTION,S DRAFT TEXT THAT WOULD REITERATE SUPPORT FOR IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY, COMMIT TO FULL SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INDICATE THAT CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE NEW IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND MULTINATIONAL FORCES IN IRAQ WOULD BE ONGOING. VATTANI IN PARTICULAR VOICED SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE SUPPORTING BRAHIMI,S "LIST" AND THE INTENTION TO CONVENE AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AT SOME UNSPECIFIED FUTURE DATE. VATTANI DISMISSED AS "RUBBISH" FRENCH EFFORTS TO SECURE "MORE DETAIL ON REVENUES" IN PARAS 15 AND 16.

5. (C) COMMENT. THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT FACES A CENTER-LEFT OPPOSITION INCREASINGLY UNIFIED IN CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ. IT IS HOPING A NEW SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WILL EMPHASIZE THE ASCENDANCY OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS ALONG WITH THE VITAL ROLE OF THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE IN POST-JUNE 30 IRAQ, AND THE FACT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAQ. SUCH AN ACHIEVEMENT WOULD, INTER ALIA, BLUNT OPPOSITION CRITICISM OF ITALY,S IRAQ POLICY IN THE RUN-UP TO THE MID-JUNE LOCAL AND EURO-PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. WHATEVER THE SUCCESS OF SECURITY COUNCIL EFFORTS, HOWEVER, WE REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT THIS GOVERNMENT WILL EXTEND ITS IRAQ DEPLOYMENT INTO JULY AND BEYOND.

6. (U) MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

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